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David

Serving His

GENERATION.

Or, A SERMON

Shewing

What is to be done in order to our so Serving our *Generation*, as that when we Dy, we shall Enter into a Blessed *REST*.

(Wherein

Some account is given concerning many Eminent Ministers of Christ at *London* as well as in *N.E.* lately gone to their *Rest*.

Occasioned by the Death, of the Reverend

Mr. JOHN BAILY,

Who Deceased at *Boston* in *New-England* *December* 12*th*. 1697.

By Increase Mather, *President of* Harvard Colledge.

Numb. 20. 29. *When all the Congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty dayes, even all the house of Israel.*

Boston, Printed by *B. Green*, & *J. Allen*. 1698.

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1

David Serving his Generation.

ACTS 13. 36.

For David, after he had served his own Generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his Fathers, and saw corruption.

THESE words are part of a *Sermon* which was Preached by *Paul* at *Antioch*, wherein he demonstrates the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, by what is written in the 16th. Psalm, where it is said, *thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see Corruption.* That must needs be meant either of *David* himself or of the *Messiah*: But it cannot be so affirmed of *David* himself, for he saw Corruption. *Davids* Body had been turned to Dust in the Grave for some Ages before that Time; therefore that passage in the Psalm must be meant of Christ, whose Holy Body did not lie long enough in the Grave to see Corruption. This is the Apo-

this Scope and Design in the words before us, which are a Compendious History of the Life and Death of *David*. 1. We have his Life: It was a Life of Service to his own Generation, and that by the Will of God. The Greek word ὑπηρετήσας, here Translated *he had Served*, is a Metaphor taken from Rowers, who serve the Pilot in the safe passage of the Veſſel. This World is a Sea, the Church is like a Ship toſſed on the Sea, God is the Pilot, by whoſe Skill and Providence that Ship is Steered: He is pleaſed to make uſe of men as *Under Rowers* to Serve his Providence. Whereas *David* is here ſaid to Serve *his own Generation*; That Expreſſion may imply two things. (1.) That he Served the People who Lived in the ſame Age in which he Lived; for in that ſenſe is the word frequently uſed in the Scripture. No man can do ſervice for a Generation of men who were gone out of the World before he came into it. Nor can any man do Service for thoſe that ſhall come into the World, after he is gone out of it, excepting what he did whilſt himſelf was here. (2.) A Generation is ſometimes taken for *the Age of one man*, as well as for the men of one Age. Thus when 'tis ſaid, *David* Served his own Generation, this is intended, ſo that as long as he Lived in the World he continued to Serve thoſe that were his Contemporaries. He Lived ſeventy years old, and ſo long did he continue

time a Servant of his Generation. Moreover, when it is affirmed, that He Served them *by the Will of God*, that may import: (1.) That he fulfilled the Decree of God in that his ſervice. He did all the Service which God from Eternity had willed that *David* ſhould do. As no Servant of the Lord can Dy before the appointed time, ſo neither ſhall he Dy until he has finiſhed all that work which God has alone determined that that man ſhall do. Every Servant of God is Immortal, until his work is done. (2.) The Expreſſion imports, that the Preceptive Will of God was that according to which *David* acted in his Serving his own Generation. As he uſed to Pray that he might know, and that he might do the Will of God. We hear him praying, *Give me Underſtanding*, ſhew me the way wherein I ſhould go, Lord, *Teach me to do thy Will*, to be aid Practice according to his own Prayers. Thus did *David* Live.

2. We have a deſcription of the Death of this Faithful Servant of God, and of His People. (1.) *He fell Aſleep*. That Expreſſion and Deſcription of Death when applied to Holy men, intimates an happy Death: In this World (as 'tis ſaid of *Judah*) they *find no reſt*; but Death puts an end to all their hard Service and Sufferings. (2.) *He was Laid unto his Fathers*. This is true both in reſpect of his Body which was Laid in the Grave, as his Fore-fathers who

were Dead had been. And in respect of his Soul, which which was carried to that Heaven, where his good Father *Jesse* (whom the Jews are wont to call *Jessai the Righteous*) and his Fore fathers, *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob* were gone before. Often in the Scripture when men dy, they are said to be *Gathered unto their People*; which Expression implies the Immortality of the Soul. At the Hour of Death men pass out of this World into the World of Souls. (3.) *David saw Corruption*; which is to be understood not of his Spirit, but of his Body only. That Corruption is in order to a Resurrection unto a Glorious Incorruption. As Grain, it may chance of Wheat or some other Grain, is sown under the Earth, and then it corrupts, but after that riseth again with a great addition of beauty; so it is as to the Dead Bodies of Saints, they are sown in Corruption, but raised in Incorruption. This may serve for the opening of the words.

The Doctrine from them is,

That the Grave will be a Blessed Bed of Rest to that man who shall Serve his own Generation according to the Will of God.

In order to the Explication and Confirmation of the Doctrine mentioned, I shall only Answer this practical Case of Conscience. *Viz.*

What

What is to be done in order to our so Serving our Generation, as that when we Dy, we may go into a Blessed Rest.

For Answer.

1. *This is to be laid in the Foundation, we must be Principled and Spirited aright, or we shall not Serve the Generation wherein we Live so as to find Acceptance with God.* They that have not a principle of Grace in their Souls, whose *hearts* are not *Established with Grace*, either will not do that Service which the Lord requires of them, or if they do, they will not so perform it as to please him. All acceptable Obedience springs from two principles.

1. *From a principle of Faith in Christ.* If the person is under the Curse and Wrath of God, the Service done by him is not pleasing. No man is accepted with God, but the Believer on Christ. It was by Faith that *Abel* offered an Acceptable Sacrifice, and *without Faith it is impossible to please God.* Heb. 11. 4, 6.

2. All acceptable obedience proceeds from *a Principle of Sincere Love to God.* He shews mercy to thousands of them that love him and keep his Commandments. *Exod.* 20. 5. That keeping of the Commandments which proceeds from a slavish fear, and not from love, is not pleasing. A small matter that proceeds from hearty love, will be accepted. History tells us of a poor man, that when he had nothing

4

better to give, presented to his King a Cup of cold Water, which because it was from hearty love was accepted and rewarded. To be sure the King of Heaven will reward small Services (the best of ours are such) which he sees flow from a principle of love to his Name. Heb. 6. 10. *God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which you have shewed to his Name.* We see this in that instance of the poor widow, whose two Mites being cast into the Lords Treasury were highly acceptable, because an evidence of great love to his Name. Whenas the most splendid Services not proceeding from these principles are of no account. King *Amaziah* did notable things in his Generation, which the Church of God in that age was benefited by. He destroyed no less than twenty thousand of their Enemies: but God did not approve of him, because his heart was not rightly principled in what he did. It is noted of him that *he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart.* 2 Chron. 25. 2. He wanted faith in Christ, & a sincere love to God in what he did. There have been amongst the Gentiles famous *Heroes*, who have done mighty things for their Country in the age wherein they lived, but since they had not faith in Christ, all those Services were (as *Austin* truly speaks) no better than *Splendida peccata*, glittering sins.

Moreover, Men will be spirited and inclined accor-

according as they are principled. The man that has faith which worketh by love in his heart, can not be of a meer selfish Spirit. It is private Interest and Selfishness which makes men unserviceable to the World in their Generation. Whenas it is impossible that the same Person should be a true Believer on Christ, and yet a meer self-seeker. Faith and Love will make a Christian deny himself, that so he may promote the Interest of Christ, and the good of his People. Thus we see in *Timothy* of whom the Apostle writing to the *Philippians*, giveth this Character, *For I have no man like minded, who will naturally care for your state: for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christs.* Phil. 2. 20, 21. He that would do Service for his Generation must be of a publick Spirit. He must have a large Soul that shall design and endeavour not so much his own particular profit, as the good of many. A man can't Serve his Generation without Serving many: for there is no Generation wherein there are not many whose welfare is to be endeavoured. For this we have a great Example in *Mordecai*, who *was accepted of the Multitude of his Brethren, seeking the wealth of his People.* Esth. 10. 3. And no less an Instance of a publick Spirit we see in *Paul*, who did not only Exhort Christians, *not to seek their own*, that is to say, not that only, but *every man anothers wealth*, but did himself practise accordingly.

I (saies he) *Please all men in all things*, (he meaneth so far as in duty he was bound to) *not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many that they may be Saved.* 1 Cor. 10. 24, 33. He that will Serve his Generation must be willing to spend and be spent to promote the welfare of others. It is reported of one of the German Princes, that he took for his device a Candle burning, with this *Motto* under it, *Alijs Serviens, meipsum Consumo*, in Serving others, I consume my self. The like unto which was that of Doctor *Sibs*, who had for his device, a light burning with this *Motto*, *Prælucendo pereo*; in giving light to others, I waste away. The man that is principled, and well stored with Faith and Love, will certainly be of a publick Spirit, and so Serve his Generation.

2. *In order to Serving our Generation, it is necessary that we should make the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures our Rule.* The written word of God is the Rule according to which we must believe. It was well replyed by our famous English Martyrologist, when some urged him to Subscribe certain *Ecclesiastical Canons*, he produced a Greek Testament, saying, *I'le Subscribe to all this*, with all my heart, but if your *Canons* are not according to this Book of God, I dare not Subscribe them. And this was but according to *Pauls* profession, Act. 24. 14. *Believing all things that are written in the Law and the Prophets.*

The will of God as revealed in the Scripture, is a Rule of Obedience as well as of Faith. It is a perfect directory, shewing us how we must Serve God, and how we must Serve the Generation wherein we live: Nor will any man Serve his Generation aright, if he does not make that his Rule. This was the Rule that *David* acted by, as the Apostle in the words before us does Testify, *He Served his Generation by the will of God.* No man is to make his own will his Rule. Kings themselves may not do it. *David* was a King: nevertheless, the Rule by which he Served his Generation, was not his own will, but the will of God. The Kings of Israel, were with their own hands to Copy out the Divine Law, that so they might from thence take direction how they should Govern. It is reported to the everlasting honour of that Christian King *Alphonsus*, that he read over the whole Bible with Comentaries fourteen times, that so he might be the better able to Serve his Generation, and that too as a King. Nor is the will of other men, or of the Generation wherein we Live, the Rule according to which we must Serve them. *Gal.* 1. 10. *Do I seek to please men, if I pleased men, I should not be a Servant of Christ*; we may do great Service for the present Generation in a way of Active Obedience. By activity in a *good cause*, but this cannot be without taking direction from the Word

Word of God. So the Psalmist, Psl. 119. 24. *Thy Testimonies are my Counsellors.* A man may likewise do singular Service for the Generation wherein he liveth, by *Suffering in a good cause.* Some will thereby be confirmed in the Faith. That Consideration was one thing which made the Holy Apostle willing to Dy a Martyr. Phil. 2. 17. *If I be offered upon the Sacrifice and Service of your Faith, I joy and rejoyce with you all*: since they would have benefit by his Sufferings, he was willing in that way to Serve them: or, it may be others will be Converted thereby. The Martyrs were instruments of Converting many in the Generation in which they lived & dyed, by their Sufferings. The Papists said concerning one of the Martyrs in *Scotland*, that was burnt to Death for his Religion, that the smoke of that fire infected all that it was blown upon, and made them turn Protestants. But in passive as well as active Obedience we must have respect to the will of God. Christians must be careful that they do not suffer as evil doers: Nor ought they to bring Sufferings on themselves further than as God shall call them thereunto: A regard must be had to the will of God in all. Wherefore the Apostle saies, *Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their Souls to him, in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.* 1 Pet. 4. 19.

3. *In*

3. *In order to Serving our own Generation, so as to be able to give a Comfortable account at Death, it is necessary that we should improve the Talents which God betrusteth us with, for the good of others.* There is great variety as to the Talents which the Lord of all seeth meet to commit unto men. There are some whom he blesseth with Estates above others: They are in that respect more able to promote the publick good; and the Lord expects it from them. Men are apt to think that their Estates are given to them for themselves, or for their own Relations only: but they ought to do good in their Generation therewith, devoting some part of their Estates unto Publick, Pious, and Charitable uses. 1 Tim. 6. 17, 18. *Charge them that are Rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to Communicate.* A rich man if he has an heart may do a world of good with his Estate, which will be Comfortable at Death, and augment his glory after Death. There are some that God has blessed them with Excellent parts, both natural and acquired. They ought not to hide those Talents under ground, but to Serve the Church of God in their Generation therewith. *The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.* 1 Cor. 12. 7. The Holy Spirit does furnish some with Eminent gifts for the sake of his Church in their Generation. The whole Church of God is profited by one

one man that has Excellent gifts and parts with a sanctified heart to improve them to the utmost for God and for his People. A man of Eminent parts and ability may possibly do great Service for a whole Generation, by speaking a few words: That accomplished Person, Sir *William Fitz James*, by a speech in Parliament made way for the Reformation in *England*, begun in the Reign of K. *H.* 8. There are some whom the Providence of God has made Rulers in the Common Wealth: They ought to improve that Power which God has put into their hearts for the Publick good. For the Encouragement of Vertue, and the Suppression of Vice, Rulers should not be a Terror to Good Works, but to the Evil. Thus did *David* when in Government, Serve his Generation. His Eyes were on the Faithful in the Land, to Countenance them, but as for Evil Doers, he would cut them off from the City of the Lord. As wee see in the 101 Psalm; He *Executed Judgement and Justice in all his people.* And in so doing Served his Generation. 2 Sam. 8 15. There are some that bear a Sacred Office, whose chief Employment is in matters wherein the Souls of men are concerned. The Generation wherein they Live will certainly be either much the better, or much the worse for them. If they are corrupt, they will be Corrupters of the Generation. *From the Pro-*

phets in Jerusalem did profaneness go forth into all the Land. Jer. 23. 15. But if they are Able and Faithful men, they will be great Blessings to the Generation. All that Live in the Age and Place with them, will have cause to bless God for them: A few such are a great Blessing to a whole Land. The Prophet *Elisha* was so; therefore when he was Sick of the Sickness whereof he Dyed, the King himself wept over him, saying, *O my Father my Father, the Chariots of Israel and the Horsemen thereof!* 2 *King.* 13. 14. intimating that his Death would make as sore Breach upon the Land, as if the Chariots and Horsemen by whom they were defended, should be removed from them. All the Nation of Israel did more than once fare the better for a Prophet that was among them. Hos. 12. 13. *By a Prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a Prophet was he preserved.* A Prophet! a Prophet! that is Eminent and Faithful; all Israel fares the better for him; he is an inexpressible Blessing to the Generation. One *Justin Martyr*, by writing an Apology for Christians, was a Blessing to all the Churches throughout the Roman Empire. The Ministers of the Gospel are by the Lord Jesus Christ himself resembled unto Stars, Rev. 1. 20. *The Seven Stars are the Angels of the Seven Churches.* Stars have a great influence on the World. The Scripture speaks of the *sweet influence of the Pleiades,*

Pleiades, which are those that are usually called the Seven Stars. So have Faithful Ministers whom Christ has fixed in the Firmament of his Church an happy influence on the World, in their several Generations. As the Stars are common Blessings to all the World, so are they. They are *the Salt of the Earth* Mat. 5. 14. should there be but one Age in which were no Faithful Ministers of Christ, the whole World would putrify for want of this Spiritual Salt by which Generations are preserved from Corruption. Ministerial Gifts are a great Talent; whoever shall improve them faithfully in Serving his own Generation, will find the Grave to be a Blessed Bed of rest to him, and his Works will follow him to Heaven. *Daniel* did not only do great Service for the People of God in the Court of *Persia*, but as a Prophet. And an Angel from Heaven said to him, *Thou shalt Rest, &c.* at the End of this World, he shall have a Glorious Lot in the First Resurrection. Dan. 12. 13. Thus then do we Serve our Generation by improving the Talents which God has given to us. There are some that have many Talents committed to them. As in the Parable, one had two Talents, another one, another Five. *David* had so. He was a Prince and a Prophet too, a man that was vastly Rich, and one of extraordinary Parts, *Wise like an Angel of God.* All these Talents did he use for the benefit

nefit of his own Generation. There are none but they have some Talent or other whereby they may be Serviceable. Tho men in Publick Place have greater Talents than others, nevertheless, they that sustain only a Private Capacity, are for all that in a Capacity to Serve the Generation which they are of. He that has a Family, by giving a good Education to his Children, Serveth the Common-wealth which will be advantaged by those Children. A private man that has a Calling, and is diligent therein, Serveth the Publick. He that is a Sincere Godly man, by his Prayers and by his Exemplary Conversation does good to others in his Generation.

4. *In order to Serving our Generation, we should consider what are the special Sins of the Age wherein we Live, and Endeavour the Reformation of them; and what are the more peculiar Truths and Duties of the Times, so as to fall in with them.* There are some Evils which are *Errores Seculi*, the more special Errors of that Age, either Practical or Doctrinal: Sometimes one Evil breaks forth, sometimes another. As any Scandal appears, we shall do a good Service in our Generation, to give a faithful Testimony against it, if it be indeed a Sin. Although there is no Age without its Errors, yet nevertheless, the Sins of the Times are not always the same. That Iniquity prevails in one Nation, which does

not in another; so in one Generation which does not in another. In the Dayes of *Noah*, the Crying Sin of the Old World was Sensuality. The World was Drowned in Sensual Lusts, while the Flood came and Drowned them all. The Earth was corrupt before God; all Flesh had Corrupted his way. Only *Noah* was found *Righteous in that Generation*. *Gen.* 7. 1. He Preached against the Sins of the Times; the Scripture calls him a *Preacher of Righteousness*. 2 Pet. 2 5. He Preached that men should Turn from Sin, And Live an Holy, Righteous Life. In that way did he serve his Generation according to the will of God. When the Children of Israel were in the Wilderness, the sin which they were chiefly guilty of was Unbelief and Murmurings, the fruit of their Unbelief: That whole Generation was guilty, excepting *Joshua* and *Caleb*, who were of another Spirit; and did a good Service for that Generation, in endeavouring to Convince them of their Evils. After they were settled in the Land of *Canaan*: Idolatry was the Reigning Sin in divers Ages. The Holy Prophets Served their Generation in bearing witness against the Idolatries and Superstitions of the Times. After the Return from Captivity, neglect of Divine Institutions and Worldliness were the special Sins of that Generation. The Prophets *Haggai* and *Zechary*, whose Ministry was blessed to the Conversion of

of not a few in that Generation, did thereby do singular Service for God and for them. None have done greater Service for the Age wherein they Lived, then Eminent Reformers. *David* was such an one. Things were much out of order when he first came to the Throne; his Predecessor *Saul* was a man of little Religion. The Ark of God was not regarded in the Dayes of *Saul*. 1 Chron. 13. 3. He was a bloody hater of the most Holy men, and one that put the Wickedest in the Nation into Places of Power and Trust; and as long as it was so, there was no possibility of the Nations being Reformed; but *David* so soon had power to do it, but he Turned Ungodly men out, and put better in their places. Such did he make to be *Pillars* in the Civil State, and did himself Judge uprightly. Psal. 75 2, 3. And he Settled Religion according to the mind of God. Thus did he cause a great Reformation, Serving his own Generation by the will of God. Several of the Kings of *Judah* were great Reformers. So *Jehoshaphat*, *Asa*, *Hezekiah*, *Josiah*; and in their being such, they Served their Generations. The Reformers who lived in the last *Century*, were great Servants of their Generation. What Service did *Luther* & *Melancthon*, do for *Germany*? *Zuinglius* for *Switzerland*, *Calvin* and *Beza*, for *Geneva* & *France*? *Knox* for *Scotland*. And the Reformers in the Dayes of K. *Edw.* the 6th. for *England*? As

there are the special Sins of the Times to be Testified against, and that we should endeavour the *Reformation* of; so there are the more peculiar Truths and Duties of the Times, which men that would Serve their own Generation, must witness unto. That Truth which is received in one Age, is Persecuted in another. There are *Labouring Truths*, which meet with the greatest opposition from Satan and from the World. There is that which is called the *present Truth*. 2 Pet. 1 12 in the Apostles Dayes, the present Truth was, *That Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the World.* The Holy Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ by Preaching and Propagating that Glorious Truth throughout the World, Served their own Generation according to the Will of God. After that Christianity had prevailed and triumphed over *Judaism* and *Heathenism*, the great Truth most opposed in the World, was that which concerns the Eternal *Deity* of Jesus Christ the Son of God. *Athanasius* did singular Service for his Generation, in standing up as a Champion for the Truth, when (as that Ancient speaks) the whole World sighed to see it self become an *Arian*. After this, *Antichristianism* (that is *Popery*) sprung up, and got head, and then the Truths which concern the Offices of Christ were invaded and violated by the Man of Sin. There have been many Confessors

fessors and Martyrs, whom the Lord Jesus has raised up in the last Ages of the World, who by their Preaching, Writing, and Sufferings, have born witness to the Truth relating to the Prophetical Office of Christ, in asserting the perfection and fulness of the Scripture, against all Traditions and Canons devised by men; and to the Priestly Office of Christ, in maintaining Justification by the alone merit of that one Sacrifice of the Humane Nature of Christ, but once offered; and by maintaining those Blessed Truths, they Served their own Generations. The Truths of this Age wherein it has been the Will of God that our Lot should be cast, are those which concern the Kingly Office and Power of the Lord Jesus Christ. That He is the only Head of his Church: That no Officers, no Ordinances, no Sacraments, or Religious Ceremonies ought to be there, besides what Christ himself has appointed. And as such as these are the Truths of the Age, so in a very special manner of the place wherein the Divine Providence has cast our Lot to be. What was it that our Fathers came into this Wilderness for? It was pure Conscience to the Second Commandment that brought them hither. It was that so they might build Sanctuaries for the Name of the Lord. It was, that so they might measure the Temple according to the Golden Rule of the Scripture. It was with respect unto Purity

as to all Church Administrations, that they followed the Lord into a Land which was not Sown. Wherefore notwithstanding too many of *this Generation*, who are lamentably Degenerated from the Principles and Spirit of their Fathers and Grandfathers, will rage at it, we cannot easily do a better Service, than to withstand Innovations which would prove fatal to the Churches, and to the Interest of Christ's Holy Kingdom among them. And let not those enter into the Sanctuary, which thou, O Lord didst Command that they should not enter into thy Congregation. *Lam.* 1. 10. We shall do well to remember, that there are Practices which in some other places of the World, would be a step towards Reformation; that in a people so Instructed and Enlightend as we have been, would deserve the Name of great Degeneracy & Apostasy.

5. *It will be good for us to follow the Examples of those who have Served God, and his People with the greatest Fidelity.* There are Examples recorded in the Scripture, not only for *Their* Commendation, but for *Our* Imitation. The Apostle therefore speaks, as in Heb. 12. 1. *Seeing we are compassed about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, let us run with Patience the race that is set before us.* Doubtless the words allude to *the Cloud* in the Wilderness by which the Children of Israel were directed in the way to *Canaan*. That Cloud had a dark side, and a light side. The *Egyptians* looked

looked only on the dark side of the Cloud, & so perished. The *Israelites* looked on the bright side of the Cloud, and were Saved. But so it is here: The Servants of God in this World have a dark side; in that they must not be imitated. We see it in *David*: he was guilty of some very Scandalous Practices: Many Egyptians, Reprobate Sinners, I mean, will imitate him therein. Some of the Ancients complain, that in their dayes, there were men that would say, *Si David cecidit, ego?* If David was guilty of such and such Sins, why may not I venture to do as he did; but they consider not Davids deep Repentance; nor did they consider his bright side; how faithful he was as to the general course of his life in the World, *Not turning aside from any thing the Lord Commanded him all the dayes of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.* 1 King. 15. 5. We should mind and imitate only the holy Example of them that have Served God and their Generation, with diligence and faithfulness. Heb. 6. 12. *That you be not slothful, but followers of them who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.* We should consider how the holy Prophets Served their Generations, and endeavour to do like them. Jam. 5. 10. *Take my Brethren the Prophets, who have spoken in the Name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.* So we should take the Prophets for an Example of Serviceableness in their Ge-

nerations. We should consider how the holy Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ Served their Generation, according to the will of God, and take Patern by them. Phil. 3. 17. *Brethren* (saith the Apostle) *be ye followers together of me, and mark them that walk so as you have us for an Example.* And besides Scripture Examples, we should consider those whom we our selves have known, that have faithfully Served their Generation: And in a special manner such faithful Ministers of Christ as we have had the knowledge of, and most of all, if we have lived under their Ministry. Heb. 13. 7. *Remember your guides*; so the words should be read, and not as we have them, *them that have the rule over you*; for it is spoken of such as were then gone out of the World; wherefore it is added, *who have spoken to you the word of God*: you must not only Remember those that *Do*, but those that *Have* spoken the word of God to you; *whose Faith follow, considering the end of their Conversation.* They have finished their course: they are come to the end of their Conversation in this World: they have done all the Service that it was the Will of God they should do in & for their Generation. Now their Survivers must Remember them and their Graces, so as to imitate them. The best remembrance of a departed Minister, is to imitate his Virtues and Graces. But above all, we should consider the Example of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ. Confessors, Reformers, Ministers, Martyrs, must be followed; but more than to any of them, we must be *Looking to Jesus.* Heb. 12. 1, 2. No other man, no not the best Apostle is to be imitated in every thing. We may not follow *Peter* himself, nor *Paul* neither in every thing, only so far as they followed Christ: We must not follow *Peter* in his dissimulation, nor *Paul* and *Barnabas* in the *Paroxysme* which was between them. 1 Cor. 11. 1. *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* Christ is an unerring Example for us to follow in every thing that is imitable: So in particular, in this of being useful and Serviceable. Never man did so much good in the world, as the Man Christ Jesus did. It is said of him, *He went about doing good.* Act. 10. 38. And he said of himself, *The Son of Man came to Minister, and to give his Life a ransome for many.* Math. 20. 28. He is the light, the Sun of the World. The Hebrews call the Sun by that name of *Shemesh*, which signifyeth to *Minister*, because the *Sun* is a most beneficial, Serviceable Creature: It is the glorious Servant of the whole World: but not to be compared with Christ, *the Sun of Righteousness.* The whole World of mankind has received benefit by the Man Christ Jesus: As for the Elect World, they are all Eternally Saved by him: As for the Reprobate World, He has caus'd them to be put under a dispensation of Divine Patience. Let us then do

good

good to all, but ofpecially to the houſh hold of Faith: The more good we do, the more like are we to Chriſt. Examples are many times more prevalent than Precepts. That ſo we may be both directed and quickened in Serving our Generation according to the will of God, it will be profitable for us, to have our Eyes upon the moſt Holy Examples.

6. Let us often think on thoſe things the Conſideration whereof has a tendency to make us Serviceable. There are Meditations, which did we often entertain them in our minds, they would be a means to awaken us unto conſtant and utmoſt endeavours to do all the good we can whilſt we remain in this World *e. g.* Let us alwayes remember what Eyes are upon us. There are glorious Eyes, which though we ſee not them, they are obſerving us in all our motions. The Eyes of holy Angels are upon us. 1 Cor. 4. 9. *We are made a Spectacle to Angels*: They obſerve how we acquit our ſelves, and if we Serve God and our Generation as we ought to do, they will come in as Witneſſes of our Fidelity at the laſt day. And the Eyes of Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God behold us: He ſaid to every one of the Churches, *I know thy workes*: and to the Miniſter in the Church of *Thyatira*, He ſaid, *I know thy Service*. Rev. 2. 19. And the Eyes of God are upon us. All this does the Apoſtle intimate to *Timothy*, as that which ſhould make him the more careful

careful to attend the Service he was called unto with utmoſt diligence and Fidelity. 1 Tim. 5. 21. *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Elect Angels.* It is reported of a faithful Miniſter of Chriſt, that there was written on the walls of his Study, *Deus videt, Angeli aſſtant, Conſcientia teſtabitur.* God ſeeth thee, Angels are by thee, Thy own Conſcience will be a witneſs how thou doſt behave thy ſelf. Let us conſider, that in Serving our own Generation, it is poſſible that we may do that which will be Service for after Generations. Iſa. 58. 12. *Thou ſhalt raiſe up the foundations of many Generations.* A man may do that whileſt he liveth, that others ſhall fare the better for in all Generations to the end of the World. This we ſee in *David*. Pſal. 71. 18. *I have ſhewed thy ſtrength unto this Generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.* He wrote the Book of *Pſalms*; and the Church of God in all Succeeding Generations has been Edified by that Divine Compoſure. We ſhould conſider that by being Serviceable, we ſhall glorify God. Joh. 15. 8. *Herein is my Father glorifyed that you bear much fruit.* The Chriſtian that is very Serviceable in his Generation, bears much fruit whereby God hath much glory. And let us remember that God honoureth us, if he does condeſcend to make uſe of us, to do any Service for his Name. All the Angels in Heaven think ſo. Heb. 1. 14. *Are they not all Miniſtring Spirits, ſent*

sent forth to Minister for them who shall be heirs of Salvation. The holy Angels do *by the will of God*, Service for the World, but especially for the Elect; and count it an honour that the Great God will so imploy them. So if we are any of us Serviceable to the World, but much more to the Church of Christ, it is a great honour that God puts upon us. *Luthers* highest ambition was that he might be a *Servant of the Church*, and was most willing to Dy, might his Death prove beneficial to the Church of God. *Mado nec moriente floreat Ecclesia.* The man who is more Serviceable than his Neighbour, is on that account more honourable. Our famous *Devenants* Motto was, *Præfuit qui profuit.* He that does most good in his Generation is the best man; such shall appear most honourable another day: For Christ has said; *If any man shall honour me*, he that Serveth his Generation according to the will of God does so, *him will my Father honour.* Joh. 12 26. Let us consider, this is the way to Live desired and to Dy lamented by the best men. Let a man be never so Serviceable, there are some ill Spirits that will wish him out of the World: but they whose esteem is to be valued, will say, *Long may that man live*, who is of such use, and does so much Service in his Generation. And when he is taken away by Death, good men will lament for him exceedingly. Praying *Jacob* was a Serviceable man, and when he was dead, *they*

they mourned with a great and very sore Lamentation. Gen. 50 10. *Josiah* was a Serviceable man, and when he was by an immature death snatched away, the Prophet *Jeremy* lamented for him, *and in their Lamentations*, that is to say, in their funeral Elegies, *they speak of Josiah to this day.* 2 Chron. 35 25. *Steven*, the Proto Martyr for Christ, was a Serviceable man, and when he was dead, devout men carried him to his Grave, *and made great Lamentation over him.* Act. 8. 2. A Serviceable life doth to be attended with honour at Death. *Hezekiah* Served his Generation with singular Piety and Fidelity: when his work was done, he slept with his Fathers, and *they buried him in the chiefest of the Sepulchres of the sons of David, and all Judah and the Inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death.* 2 Chron. 32 33. *Jehoiada* the Priest had been an Eminent Servant of his Generation; and when he was Dead they Buried him in an Honourable Tomb. *They Buried him in the City of David among the Kings, because he had done good in Israel, both towards God, and towards his House.* 2 Chron. 24. 16. And let us consider, that our Service will be rewarded. Tho it may be not by men. We may do the most Generous and General Service for our people, & be ill rewarded by an Ungrateful World. But we Serve a better Master then is the Generation whom we Serve, we Serve the Lord Jesus Christ; and he will be sure to reward whatever

ever Service we have done according to the Will of God. Rev. 22. 12. *Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his works shall be*: If he that has given a cup of cold water to a Disciple shall be rewarded, what a glorious reward shall that man have, who has been instrumental to the Conversion and Salvation of many Souls. It was once the Profession of a Dying Minister, *We Serve a good Master, who will pardon our imperfections, and give us great Wages for a little Service.* Let us more over consider, That we have but a little time to Serve our Generation in; it is but whilst time continues, that we can do any Service. There is no work in the Grave whither we are all a going apace; we have but a short Age to be working in, our days are but as handbreadths, and our age is as nothing. The thought of it should make us do all the good we can in the little time that we have to live: It concerns us to work whilst the day of life last, for the night of Death is hastening, when no man can work. It is for this reason chiefly that life is to be desired by a good man that is fit to dy. It would be much better for him to Dy, and go to Heaven, than to abide longer in this woful World; only that as long as we are alive, we may do that Service for God and his people, which after Death cannot be done by us: Therefore are we to thank God for continuing our lives. Excel-

lent was the Speech and Spirit of our English *Josiah* (as he is commonly and deservedly called) King *Edward 6.* who after he had promoted the Building of *Christ Church* Hospital, and other Works for the benefit of the City & Nation, and with his own hand, both Signed a Charter, & contributed liberally, in the presence of his Council, Lifting his Eyes to Heaven, said, *O Lord God, I thank thee, in that thou hast spared my life to do this Service for thy Name before I Dy.* Two days after which he dyed, having in a few years done wonderful Service for God and for his People.

7. *We should in a singular manner take care of those things wherein the Welfare of the Generation is concerned.* The Spiritual and Eternal Welfare of those we live amongst, we ought most of all to desire and endeavour. And therefore to do what in us lieth, that the Gospel of Salvation may be Preached to them. Alas, there are dark Corners in this Country, which are perishing for lack of Vision. It is said, (Cant. 8. 8.) *We have a little Sister that has no Breast, what shall we do for her?* So there are little places (and some considerable ones too) in *New England*, that have no Breasts, no Ministers from whom they may receive the sincere milk of the Word. What shall be done for them? There are some especially in this Town of *Boston*, who have Contributed liberally unto so good a Work, by which they have

have done a real Service for Christ, and for the Souls of men, and so it will be acknowledged another day. In taking yet further care, as for the Gospellizing of *Heathen indians*, so of *Heathenish English*, we shall do an acceptable Service in our Generation. Let me also say, That the Welfare both of this present, and of succeeding Generations, is very much concerned in the Establishment of the *Colledge*, which is the Fountain from whence must flow those Streams which will make glad the City of God. By taking care that the Government thereof be conferred in faithful hands, that will transmit it unto such Successors, we may be instrumental to make Generations happy. Whoever shall be instrumental in obtaining so great a Good, will do a singular Service both for the present, and After Generations. What a doleful Case had *New-England* been in before this day, had it not been for that Blessed Nursery, almost all the Churches being supplied from thence. Nor do I know wherein I or any man can do a greater Service for this Generation, than by taking effectual care that the *Tutors* there be such as shall make Conscience to Establish the Young Scholars in those Holy Principles of Truth, for a Testimony whereunto their Blessed Fathers came into this Wilderness, and for the Defence and Propagation whereof they Erected a *Colledge* here.

But

But thus for Answer to the Case proposed.

All that I shall say by way of *Application* is only this.

We see that no Eminency of Usefulness can keep men out of the Grave. A *David* that Serveth his Generation with the greatest industry and fidelity, must fall asleep, and see Corruption. When his work is done, he must go to Rest in the Bed of the Grave; and a sweet Rest and Repose will it be. It is said of Merciful men, & Righteous men; yea, of Serviceable *Josiah's*, that they *Enter into Peace*. So they do at the Hour of Death in respect of their Souls, and *they shall rest in their Beds*, namely in respect of their Bodies, which are Laid in the Grave. Isa. 57. 1, 2. The Psalmist takes notice that Wise men Dy as well as the Fool, and the brutish person. Psal. 49. 10. So the most Useful men dy, as also those who are *telluris inutile pondus*, Burdens on the Face of the Earth, and it may be Scandals to the Generation whereof they are. Yea, it is one of the Mysteries of Divine Providence, that eminently Useful men are taken away by Death, when others that only cumber the Ground, are suffered to live. An Holy Minister, (who has lived Sermons as well as Preached them) Dyes, when others who

have

have been a reproach to the Gospel, and to all Religion, are living still.

And truly, every year does sadly confirm the Truth of what you hear. Have we not seen very Afflicting Instances of it in the year that is past. Look over into *London*, and we shall see that eminently Faithful and Useful Ministers of God, are lately removed from thence. I forbear to speak of a Brother of mine, who had his Education in this *Colledge*, and after that Served his Generation in the Work of the Gospel for the space of Forty Seven Years in *England*, *Holland* and *Ireland*; and now he is Fallen asleep. But there is Blessed *Ansley*, *Cole*, *James*, *Vincent*, all within this twelve-month Gone to *the Spirits of Just men made perfect*; and a little before them, *Burs*, *Fimber*, *Lawrence*, *Mayo*, these were all Eminent Ministers of Christ. And I have the rather mentioned them because I had not long since a dear Acquaintance with them all. One such stroke seldom goes alone. An ingenious Writer on occasion of many Ministers Dying in the same year, observes, *That when a Generation of Contemporary persons begins to Crack, it quickly falls. The Leases of their Earthly Cottage Commencing at the same date, oft at the same Term Expire.* And I remember that Twenty years ago, an Eminent Person in *London*, sent me a Catalogue of no less then Forty Two Ministers belonging to that City, who

who Dyed in the space of about ten years. But we need not look so far off as *London* for a tremendous Verification of the Truth before us, since amongst our selves in less then half a year, besides several young Ministers, three others of principal Note, and Use, are Laid in the Grave. In the Neighbouring Colony, no longer since than the last month, that Serviceable *Hooker*, (who was the worthy Son of a most worthy Father) is gone to his Rest. He was eminently Useful on more accounts than one. The Lord Jesus Christ had made Him a Pillar in the Temple of his God: (And without Envy be it spoken) there is not a greater Pillar remaining in all the House of God throughout that Jurisdiction. The Churches there are all weakned by his Fall. The manner of his Death was very much like unto that of our Precious and forever famous *Fuel*, whom Death found in the Pulpit Preaching to a Congregation at *Lacock* in *Wiltshire*. I observe that many Super eminent Ministers of the Gospel have dyed suddenly: So Mr *Norton* the never to be forgotten Teacher of *this Boston*, And in *England* of late years, Mr *Hainsworth* in *Manchester*, Mr. *Wells* and Mr. *Pledger* in *London*: And when a few years since, I Sojourned in that City, Mr. *Hurst* (my dear friend) and Mr. *John Oakes*, (faithful and eminent Ministers of Christ both of them) were taken ill in the Pulpit, from thence carried home and

dyed suddenly. It was an honour and a favour from God to them, that they were *found so doing*. Mr. *Capel*, Mr. *Vines*, and Mr. *Gouge*, (that Eminent Servant of his Generation, who was the Son of famous Doctor *Gouge*, and in Exemplary Piety not inferiour to his Father) all these (honourable men of God) dyed in their sleep, on a Lords day night: Thus did they fall asleep after they had Served their Generation according to the will of God: What hapned to them was more like a *Translation*, than a *Death*. Such a Death as theirs was, and as our *Hookers* was, is sometimes a sign of Gods special Love to his Servants, but of his Anger kindled against that People, out of whose hands he has snatched his Jewels. But we see then that the dearest Servants of Christ are Subject to the arrests of Death. Yea, if we look into this very Congregation, we see it, one that often spoke in the Name of the Lord from this Pulpit, and (as I take it) the words which I am now upon, were the last which he Preached on in this Place; six months ago he Rested from all his Labours. God made him very Serviceable, especially in that part of the Country where for the greatest part of his Time, he had Served his Generation. *Portsmouth* oweth more than a little to his Memory. No longer since then the last Week, another Faithful Ambassador of Christ is called Home, who if he had been Living,

ving, and in Health, should have spoken in the Name of the Lord here this day. It is said in Prov. 10 7. *the memory of the Just is blessed*, which words the Jews constantly apply to their Dead Deceased Friends that have been of eminent Use among them. The Seventy Greek Interpreters express it by saying, The Memory of the Just is [*met enkomione*] *with Praises*. It is not my work this day so much to Praise the Dead, as to Instruct the Living: Nor shall I enlarge on his Character of whom you heard many things the last Lecture. Only I must say of him, as is here said of David, *He Served his Generation according to the will of God*. He was truly a very faithful Servant of God Considered as a Christian. He kept a strick Watch over the frame of his own heart every day. If he had hapned to speak but so much as one unprofitable word, so tender was his Conscience as that he would severely reflect upon it, and mourn before the Lord in Secret, afore he slept that night. He was of a Peaceable temper; and would do any thing which he thought was not repugnant to the will of God, rather than make a Schism in a Church of Christ. Considered as a Minister, he was Eminently Faithful and Serviceable. God honoured him, in making him one of the *Confessors* of these last dayes. The Spirit of a *Martyr* was in him. He endured a long Im-

Imprisonment in *Limrick* in *Ireland*, for his bearing witness unto *the present Truth*, which the Lord would have his Servants in this Generation to stand up for. And on that account (as our Fathers,& we our selves,some of us did) he became Subject unto a Voluntary Exile into these goings down of the Sun. I have been informed, that the unhappy man, who was the chief Instrument and Instigator of his Imprisonment in *Limrick*, was afterwards himself by the Papists made a Prisoner there, and that then he Cryed out in horror; *This misery is come upon me, for my causing* Mr. Baily *to be cast into Prison.* When his Ministry found great acceptance in the World, his Soul would tremble left haply his *Reward* should be (like that of the Pharisees) only a *Reputation* amongst men in this World. His very heart was ingaged in desires and endeavours to promote the Conversion of Souls: And God made him Eminently Successful therein. There are many who will bless God to Eternity, that ever they knew him: And at the day of judgment (which the Lord hasten) we shall no doubt see verified in him that Scripture in *Daniel*, where it is said, *They that turn many to Righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.*

The

The Use which we should all make of such a Death, is, to Prepare to follow: And therefore to make all the haste we can in finishing our work. If we serve our Generation according to the will of God; If we Glorify him on the Earth, when we have finished the work which he has given us to do, he will glorify us with Himself, and that not for one Generation, but throughout the never ending dayes of ETERNITY.

Tibi Domine et a Te.

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